

753 as a feather, escaped. She was so frightened, nevertheless, that she fled to the forest and forsook her activities, so that the epidemic ceased.⁸⁰

755 One way of avoiding death or serious harm is to propitiate the spirits through vows.

782 It happens often that a sick person makes a vow (*zarikajet sie*), i.e. a promise, that if he regains his health, he will forego certain pleasures in life, or abstain from some pleasant task. A certain woman, for example, accidentally drove a needle into the palm of her hands, and when the physician, after chloroforming her, removed the needle, the convalescent pledged herself never again to sew embroidered shoulder-pieces on to a shirt of hers. This promise she kept religiously, sewing only on shirts belonging to others. Another woman, in order to rid herself of a headache, promised that she would not spin on Fridays; when relieved, she occupied herself every Friday with a different task in order to avoid spinning. A peasant in order to preserve his cattle during an epidemic that had broken out, solemnly vowed to give up drinking liquor for half a year, and when his cattle were saved he kept his word.⁸¹

755 Believing in the supernatural causation of disease, the people have little faith in scientific medical treatment, if they do not ignore it altogether. Poverty, though doubtless a factor, is far less important than the conviction, fully compatible with the prevailing conception of disease, that the native medicine-men and their remedies are more reliable than physicians and their medications. That the question of money is not decisive can be seen from the fact that quack doctors often receive larger fees than trained physicians. Even when given free treatment and medicine, an individual often puts aside the medicament and then boasts that he has gotten well because he has not used it.⁸² While he places full confidence in his own remedies,

[113]

⁸⁰ Woycicki, K. W. *Polnische Volkssagen und Maerchen* (Berlin, 1839), pp. 23-4.

⁸¹ Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 160.

⁸² Kaendl, R. F. *Die Huzulen* (Wien, 1894), p. 93.